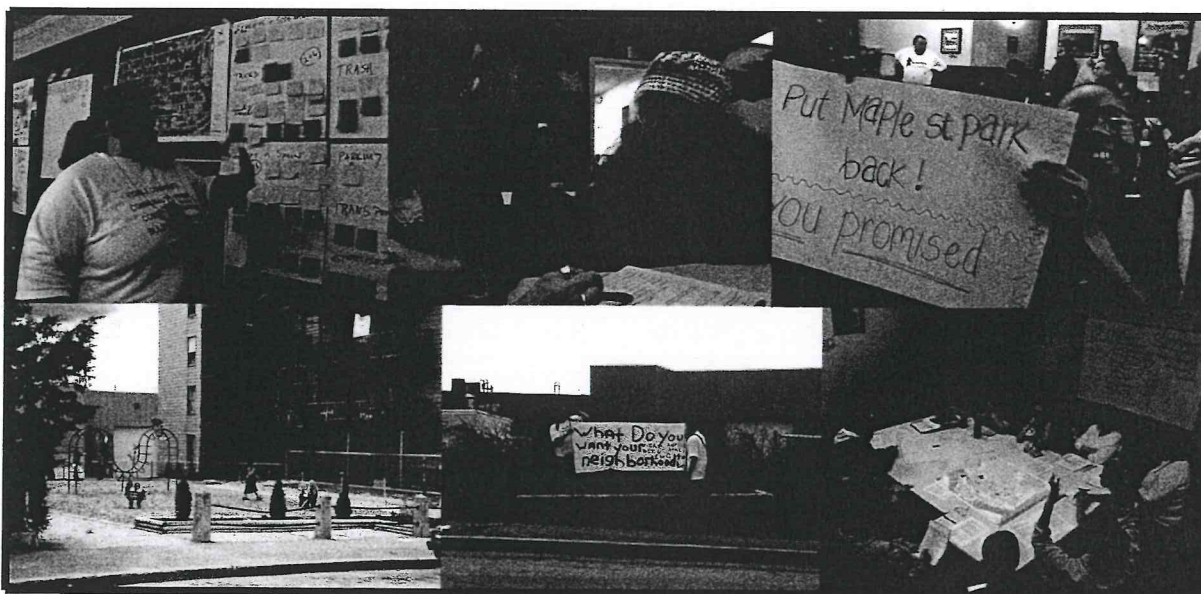
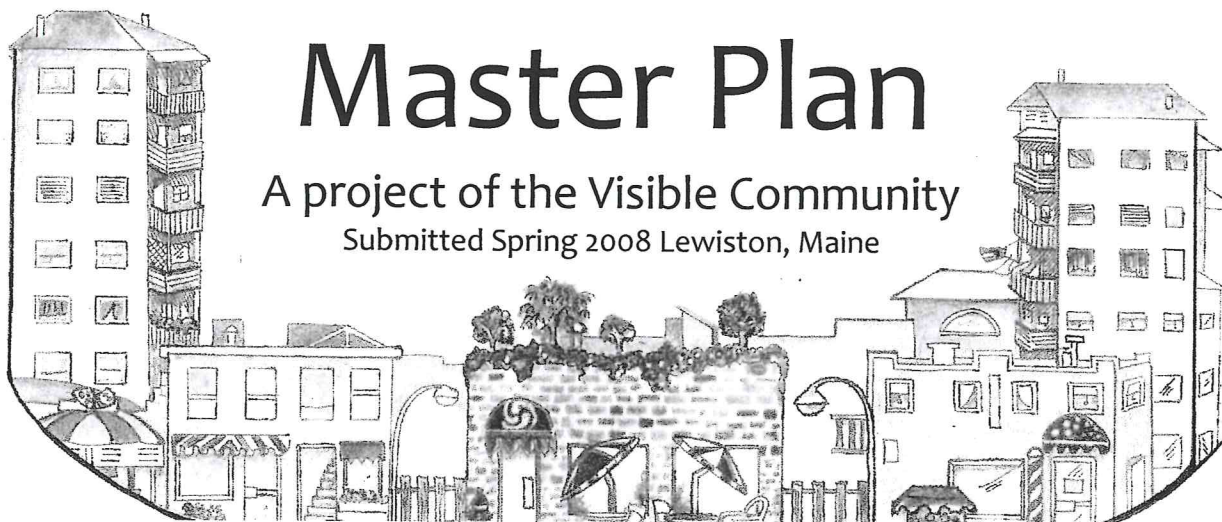


# The People's Downtown Master Plan

A project of the Visible Community  
Submitted Spring 2008 Lewiston, Maine



Funded By:

PRESBYTERIAN COMMITTEE ON THE  
**Self-Development  
of People**

## Acknowledgements:

Many community members and organizations have helped make this plan possible.

We would like to thank first and foremost the residents of downtown Lewiston for sharing so openly your ideas, visions, hopes and dreams. Together, we can make them happen! We dedicate this plan in your honor.

We would also like to thank:

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Papa Johns  
Dunkin Donuts  
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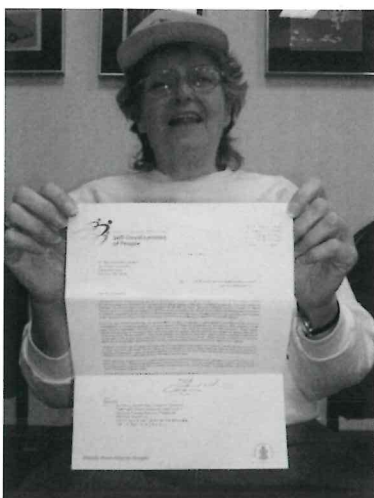




*"To accomplish great things, we must dream as well as act."*

- *Anatole France*

The Visible Community is a group of concerned downtown residents and community members who are working together to ensure that resident's voices are heard in Lewiston city planning decisions. The group initially formed in response to the City's release of the Heritage Initiative, a downtown revitalization plan that would have divided the downtown with a thruway, removed 25% of the population, and was conceived with no input from those who would have been affected. When the City opted not to go forth with the Heritage Initiative, the Visible Community decided to continue to meet and to take a proactive approach to future downtown development plans by seeking ways to become involved in the various planning processes within our city. From speaking at City Council meetings, to being represented on the City's Downtown Neighborhood Task Force, to supporting city council candidates, our goal is to be a part of initiatives that will help improve the quality of life and the economic well-being of all downtown stakeholders while maintaining a focus on educating and empowering residents.



Part of this proactive approach was to begin a process to design our own master plan for downtown Lewiston; one that would be inclusive of the many voices that have felt unheard and undervalued in previous decision-making processes. We began to work on the *"People's Downtown Master Plan."*

We applied for, and received a grant from, the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People. The overarching goal of the People's Plan is to engage large numbers of downtown residents, including new immigrants and refugees, in shaping the future of the downtown neighborhoods. Another goal is to complete a Visioning Process that leads to community action and change around identified issues and problems. The area of focus in the plan includes Park, Maple, Knox, Spruce, Bates, Blake and

Birch Streets - the most threatened neighborhoods downtown. The People's Plan public sessions were modeled on the State Planning office's "Community Visioning Handbook" created to help community groups and stakeholders draw out the dreams and visions of residents and those who work in the neighborhood.



Our People's Plan is not just a vision for the future of downtown Lewiston. The plan is also a process of empowerment. One central goal of the People's Plan is to recruit and develop new leaders in the downtown residential neighborhood; people who are interested and willing to commit some time to organizing their immediate neighbors to dream, make and implement the Peoples' Plan. The People's Downtown Master Plan is a model that we hope will be used in other areas of Lewiston in the future, as well as in other areas of Maine and beyond. We are creating a "how to" manual for other communities to use, as well as a video documentary that captured the process.



People who live outside of downtown often have a very different view of the downtown neighborhood than we residents do. We see our neighborhoods as safe – in fact Lewiston has the lowest crime rate of any of the major cities in Maine. We see downtown as home - a place that holds our hopes and dreams for a better future and a better quality of life for us and our families. We recognize there are problems like in any community but the negative myths persist. We face these myths at City Hall, at DHHS, at the grocery store, at school and on the street. The myths come in the form of disparaging remarks about how none of us

work and none of us pay taxes, suggesting that we aren't really worth much as human beings. Instead of seeing that there are systemic reasons for our community's economic problems, many blame individuals for personal failure. We'd like to set the record straight with our People's Plan. First we value everyone in our community, whether they are able to work or not. We know every member contributes to our neighborhood in important ways. We shop at local stores, we help baby sit our neighbor's children, we offer a place to stay when family members are down on their luck, we share resources and food through hard times. While some charge that we don't contribute economically to our community, the truth is that some of us are homeowners downtown by choice and many of us rent. Our rents, often costing us more than 50% of our income, go to support community services that everyone in Lewiston benefits from. Although we pay each month, we don't build the kind of equity that our landlords are able to build with our rental payments. This reality should be acknowledged and respected. We also internalize these negative ideas about ourselves since we see and hear them all the time. When our dreams are dashed again and again, as so many of ours have been in the downtown neighborhood, we could just throw up our hands and become what outsiders expect us to be. What we've learned from the People's Plan is that when we work together we have the power to change these things and believe in a better future for our community and ourselves.



Since March 2007, the Visible Community has worked hard to reach out to neighborhood residents and has rallied the participation of over 400 downtown residents through door-to-door surveys, visioning meetings, phone calls and community events to address needed changes in a proactive way.

This broad survey of the needs and desires of downtown residents asked the questions:

1. What do you like about downtown Lewiston? What do you want to see supported and protected?
2. What don't you like about downtown Lewiston? What needs to change?
3. What are your dreams for the future of downtown Lewiston? What do you want Lewiston to be like in 10 years?

After asking these questions of residents, we compiled all of the information we gathered. We then followed up by presenting the information to residents and asking them what they believe are their priorities for change. This process brought forth four specific priorities:

1. Expand affordable public transportation
2. Improve and create more safe, well maintained, truly affordable housing.
3. Establish accessible and free community center for persons of all ages
4. Increase job opportunities and job training for downtown residents

We, residents and community members involved in downtown, are an important resource for development and we are ready to work on the next phase of the People's Downtown Master Plan: its implementation. Since we began this process, some very exciting initiatives have come forward, including the Downtown Neighborhood Task Force (DNTF) and Youth + Adults + Dialogue = Action (YADA). While the DNTF is still working on its development plan, YADA has begun work on its priorities, which include a Community Center. We also understand that the federally funded Empower Lewiston program is looking at ways it can help to improve transportation throughout the downtown area. The implementation of the People's Downtown Master Plan will be that much more successful due in part to these efforts.



The People's Plan covered neighborhoods spanning six blocks; including sections of Park, Knox, Bates, Blake, Spruce, Maple, and Birch Streets.

## THE VISION

***"A community is democratic only when the humblest and weakest person can enjoy the highest civil, economic, and social rights that the biggest and most powerful possess."***

*– A. Philip Randolph*

We see the downtown community as vibrant, diverse and residential, containing a variety of housing from low- to moderate-income and we want to see it stay that way. We envision a City that promotes and supports a user-friendly public transportation system. We also envision a City that has gathering places for both young and old to come together and develop relationships with each other through community programs and activities. We envision a downtown community that has a mix of housing and small businesses that provides truly affordable rents and has economic opportunity for the people who live here. We envision a City where children growing up downtown are valued just as highly as children growing up outside of downtown. We believe that everyone has the right to healthy food, clothing, housing, health care and necessary social services. We also believe that everyone has a right to community support in the event of job loss, illness, disability, old age or other circumstances beyond their control.

## METHODS

In order to encourage the participation of as many downtown residents as possible in the development of the plan, a variety of initiatives were planned to gain input for the planning process, beginning in March and ending in November 2007.

Community events with enjoyable activities were held through the spring, summer and fall, to inform residents about the goal of developing a master plan for the downtown, and to draw people into conversation about it. A potluck supper was held with maps and pictures of playground equipment for residents to mark their likes, dislikes, and dreams.



Surveys were taken of residents' ideas and opinions by going door-to-door in the targeted neighborhoods, and by interviewing persons being served at the Jubilee Center. Translation was available for new Americans. Seventy-five (75) surveys were completed. Residents were contacted by phone for their input and to invite them to community events and to visioning meetings.

Two hundred and sixty (260) residents participated in visioning meetings. Meeting in groups of close neighbors, their likes, dislikes, and dreams were again recorded regarding both physical and non-physical aspects of downtown neighborhoods.



Finally, in December 2007, there was a meeting to prioritize the top three (3) goals, with the later addition of a fourth top goal.

A total of four hundred thirty (430) residents were engaged in the activities described above.

## IDENTIFIED ISSUES



*"The best political community is formed by citizens..."*  
- Aristotle

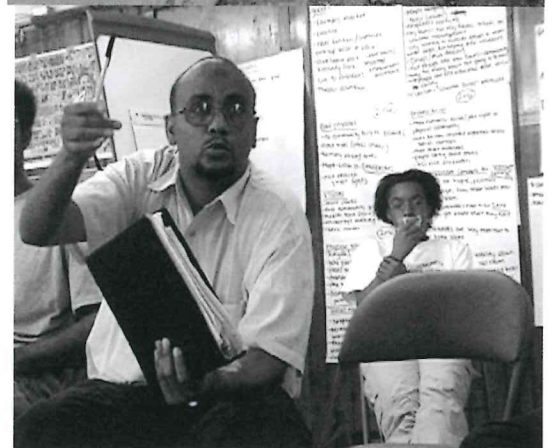
During the many public processes sponsored by the Visible Community, needs to be addressed in the downtown were identified by participating residents. They included (in order of priority):

- Transportation
  - Better Bus Service
  - Improved Bicycle Paths/Lanes
  - Maintained Sidewalks and Paths for Pedestrians
  - Pedestrian Safe Streets for Car and Truck Traffic
  - Community residents are more self-sufficient and better connected to each other
- Safe, Affordable, Quality Housing
- Community Gathering Places with Appropriate Programs Scheduled
  - Youth Services and Activities including a Community Center
- Education/Training Necessary for Livable Wage Jobs
  - Livable Wage Job Creation
- Create buffers between commercial and residential areas of downtown
  - Preserve Mill Block on Park Street
  - Use Maple Street Park and Ritz Location for community use and benefit
  - Ensure community involvement
- Improved Parks, Green Spaces and Gardens, and More of Them





- Improved Neighbor Relations
- Infrastructure Improvements
  - Parking
  - Streets
  - Sidewalks
  - Street Trees and Other Landscaping
  - Street and Building Lights
- Stores and Shopping
  - Small scale, affordable retail
  - Grocery store
  - Reny's type store
- Better Health Access and Facilities
- Cleaner Downtown
  - Better Trash Removal
  - Improved Street Cleaning
  - Places for Dogs to be Walked and Cleaned-up After
  - Improved Opportunity for Recycling
- Improved Safety and Better Relationships with Police
- Improved Schools
- Better Child Care- Increased Access and More Convenient
- Improved Downtown Image



At the public Visioning Session, over 40 citizens participated in a day-long process. They discussed why they live or work in the neighborhood. They identified both likes and dislikes of the neighborhood, concerning both physical and social aspects. They asked: "What is missing?"

The process helped lead participants to create a vision of what kind of downtown they would want to see in the next 10-20 years.

The large group broke into 4 smaller groups to create their priorities and vision. Here are their findings:

#### Group 1:

Housing (safe, affordable, quality for everyone)

Community Relations (Unite and organize residents including new immigrants and refugees towards a common goal)

#### Group 2

Housing, Streets and Sidewalks

Social and Image of downtown – we need HOPE!

#### Group 3:

Community Center with green space in historic building. Center has programs like sports, activities for teens, seniors, job training etc.

Expand bus hours and improve walkability of downtown

#### Group 4:

The Downtown needs Neighborhood Stores (perhaps at the Pepperill Mill on Adams Avenue) and smaller shops that are affordable.

### GOALS & ACTION STEPS

*“I am not bound to win but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed but I am bound to live up to what light I have. I must stand with anybody that stands right; stand with them while they are right and part with them when they go wrong.”*

*- Abraham Lincoln*

After all of the public input processes, the following 4 priorities were identified for downtown residents and the City of Lewiston to collaborate on:

1. **Expand affordable public transportation**
2. **Improve and create more safe, well maintained, truly affordable housing.**
3. **Establish accessible and free community center for persons of all ages**
4. **Increase job opportunities and job training for downtown residents**

The People’s Plan sets out an action plan to take residents’ dreams and make them a reality. We have identified many assets in our neighborhoods, including organizations and institutions that could achieve much of what the People’s Plan sets as goals.

Listed next to each action step is a list of stakeholders and related organizations that have the skills and know-how to help us accomplish these dreams.

## Goal 1: EXPAND AFFORDABLE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION



Public transportation needs to be expanded in order to best serve the residents of the downtown. Although there are bus stops near city hall and along Pine Street, most of the residential downtown is left without public transportation. Residents need to be able to access public transportation in order to go to work, buy groceries or access the Food Pantry, visit friends in other neighborhoods, and other outings. Residents have enjoyed the downtown shuttle and believe that the model could be used for other buses as well; they also enjoy the Lewiston-Auburn transfers. Many residents are interested in using public transportation but cannot currently access the bus because there are too many barriers, including limited operating hours, a lack of stops in the residential neighborhood, inconvenient bus routes, and no long-term (more than one month) pass options.

- Planning meeting with stakeholders in transportation (Empower Lewiston – CityLink/LATC, AVCOG, ATRC, residents, CCI, WMCA, City Staff, Visible Community)
- Bring attention to changes that are needed (Visible Community, residents)
- Bus stops will be clearly marked, include a covered waiting area, small bench, and maps with schedules
  - materials from old bus stops will be moved to the new routes (i.e corner of Park St. and Ash St.) (CityLink/LATC, AVCOG)
- Expanded bus service
  - There will be stops at major plazas and shopping areas including Family Dollar & Big Lots (CityLink/LATC, AVCOG)
  - There will be stops in the residential downtown including on Park Street, Maple Street, Knox Street, the B-Street Community Center, the Multipurpose Center, Sisters of Charity Food Pantry, etc. (CityLink/LATC, AVCOG)
  - The bus will go to City used impound lots, Country Lane Homes, and Hillview, (CityLink/LATC, AVCOG)
  - The bus will expand operating hours – after 5:00 pm Mon-Fri and weekend service (CityLink/LATC, AVCOG)
  - Buses will stop for flaggers (CityLink)
  - Larger, more regular, bus loops with more bus stops (CityLink/LATC, AVCOG)
- If the passenger train comes back to Lewiston there will be a bus that goes to the train station (CityLink/LATC, AVCOG)
- Promote bus service (Visible Community, ATRC)
- The bus to Portland is very expensive. We need to look into business sponsorships or other funding to make the bus more affordable, which will increase ridership (Greyhound, City Staff, CityLink/LATC, AVCOG, Visible Community)



## **Goal 2: IMPROVE AND CREATE MORE SAFE WELL MAINTAINED TRULY AFFORDABLE HOUSING**



Over the past decade a lot of affordable housing downtown has been removed in order to decrease density or because it was unsafe. Unfortunately, most of these units were not replaced by new, safe affordable housing. This has created a problem for many people who need shelter on a fixed-income.

- Improve code enforcement (City Council, City Code Enforcement) - add additional staff, more landlord accountability (City Council)
- Tenants union – help tenants hold more weight,

can help tenants and landlords communicate better and talk about responsibility (Visible Community, residents)

- Tenants resource center – a place tenants can go to find out more about their rights and talk with people who may be able to help them through their situation (CCI, CEI, Pine Tree Legal, Visible Community)
- Increase funding for affordable housing through grants, federal matches and leveraging (City, LHA, MSHA, CCI, CEI)
- Improve unsafe housing, increase number of rental vouchers, replace old, unsafe housing with new affordable housing options (City, LHA, MSHA, CCI, CEI)
- Trainings for landlords and tenants – include information about tenants rights and responsibilities (Landlord's Association, Pine Tree Legal)
- Reach out to truly struggling small landlords – help with cost of heating oil so it's not passed on to the tenants and small landlords don't have to abandon or foreclose on their building (FEMA, City, CEI, CCI)
- Increase energy efficiency of buildings (Landlords, residents, CCI, CEI, LHA)
- Improve loans to respectful and responsible landlords (CEI, CCI, City)
- Advertise loans more - for buildings that need a lot of work focus on 0% interest to give landlords an incentive to rehab the building, partner with FEMA for grants for heating (Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD))
- More enforcement of shoveling sidewalks and drives, make sure stairs and pathways are sanded (City Code Enforcement, Landlords)

## **Goal 3: ESTABLISH ACCESSIBLE & FREE COMMUNITY CENTER**

Although there are a number of places in the downtown for selected social services and planned gatherings, there is not a center that is open every day with adequate space for comprehensive resources for youth, adults, and elders. The Multipurpose Center has not been able to meet these needs. The public library is not designed to be a directed youth center. Trinity Jubilee Center is at capacity for the social, nutritional, drop-in, and educational services it delivers. B Street Community



Center is also functioning at capacity. There is no space for structured indoor recreation downtown. Support of such a center meets the criteria for preferred use of Community Development Block Grant funds.

Unlike our other goals, this goal is not focused on fixing already existing programs and opportunities, but is about creating something new. Because of this difference our recommendation is for local groups such as The Visible Community, YADA, New Beginnings, YMCA, YWCA, Empower Lewiston, Lots to Gardens, Lewiston High School, Lewiston Adult Education, and the City of Lewiston to work together to create a process that will meet the following criteria.

- There will be a centrally located, easily accessible community center in the downtown neighborhood
- The community center will be open on weekends, school vacations, and after hours on weekdays
- There will be space for intergenerational programming for all ages
- There will be program space in the community center for downtown service agencies, job training, tutoring and after school programs, clubs such as a baby-sitting club, and parenting classes, and support groups for persons released from jail
- There will be field trips and other programs to help youth learn about the wider world
- There will be free, healthy snacks for participants
- There will be a drop-in capability for persons who need someone to talk to
- There will be ample opportunities for volunteers to support the work of the center

## **Goal 4: INCREASE JOB OPPORTUNITIES & JOB TRAINING FOR DOWNTOWN RESIDENTS**

Economic development in downtown Lewiston has largely benefited the wider community and in many ways put harmful pressure on the downtown residential neighborhoods. Affordable housing units have been replaced by commercial operations with no assurance of their benefiting downtown residents via job opportunities close to home. There are unmet needs for stores selling the



necessities of living that are in walking distance in the neighborhood. Accessible job training opportunities are the primary way persons can lift themselves out of poverty. These would be the hallmarks of a truly livable, All-America City.

- There will be a specific plan to attract jobs that match the skill sets and abilities of downtown residents (DECD, Chamber of Commerce)
- The plan will include bringing small businesses and small manufacturing, e.g., retail, ice cream parlor, grocery store, shoe shop to downtown (DECD, Chamber of Commerce)
- The plan will strongly promote the use of existing buildings for new businesses (Historic Preservation Review Board, City Staff)



- The plan will provide resources to create small business incubators to support downtown residents in starting new businesses (Empower Lewiston, Chamber of Commerce, DECD, CEI, CCI)
- Jobs created by the City's downtown economic development efforts will give first priority to downtown residents (City Council, DECD, new employers)
- Jobs created will pay a living wage (City Council, State Legislators, The Maine Fair Trade Campaign, MPA, Career Center)
- The application process for jobs created will be clear, well-publicized, with assistance provided (Career Center, City Staff, employers)
- There will be a specific plan to increase accessible job training opportunities for downtown residents (Career Center, WorkReady, Lewiston Adult Education, new employers)
- New employers will be required to train and hire 25 percent of their workforce from downtown residents in exchange for tax breaks and incentives (City Council)
- The plan will include the use of computer labs at B-Street & Library for trainings, with volunteers to be monitors (Lewiston Public Library, Lewiston Adult Education)
- The Aspirations program at Lewiston High School will be fully staffed and funded to facilitate transitions from high school to college (Lewiston School Committee, City Council)
- Additional support will be provided at LHS and the Adult Learning Center for students wishing to transition to the workforce (Lewiston School Committee, Lewiston Adult Education, City Council)



**\* It is clear that there are already resources in our community to make each of these goals a reality; we just need to make these a priority and work together to make these dreams a reality for the betterment of downtown and Lewiston as a whole. \***

## CDBG PROCESS

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is a critical resource available to the City of Lewiston that should be used to address the priorities in the People's Downtown Master Plan. According to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, "The CDBG program works to ensure decent affordable housing, to provide services to the most vulnerable in our communities, and to create jobs through the expansion and retention of businesses."

Entitlement Communities receive CDBG money because there are poor and vulnerable populations within the defined community. In order to ensure that the people for whom the grant is received are also the people who benefit from its application, HUD requires that municipalities receiving CDBG money implement an effective Citizen Participation Plan. "This integral process emphasizes participation by persons of low or moderate income, particularly residents of predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, slum or blighted areas, and areas in which the grantee





proposes to use CDBG funds.” The Visible Community believes that the People’s Plan is a key document to fulfilling the Citizen Participation element of the CDBG program that is required by HUD.

In order to make the CDBG administration process as accountable and effective as possible, the following steps should be implemented:

- 1) Use the People’s Plan as a document to step from in determining what are the priority issues for people in this section of the Entitlement Community.
- 2) Distinguish “General City Services” that should be paid by the General Budget from “Special Projects” that directly support and enhance the quality of life for people with low incomes in downtown Lewiston. CDBG money should be used only for these Special Projects, and not as a way to simply offset spending from the General Budget (such as road repair or funding administrative work that is unrelated to CDBG programs).
- 3) CDBG money MUST NOT be spent on projects that simply “clean up” Lewiston for the benefit of our image to outside people. We understand the “Trickle Down” theory that attracting white-collar jobs will eventually create more jobs for working class people. However, CDBG money is supposed to directly benefit the people who already live in the blighted neighborhoods. If the money is not being spent directly to the benefit of downtown residents, then it is potentially being used to subsidize gentrification, and this is not the purpose of the CDBG program. For example, if a commercial loan is used to fund a program that does not predominantly serve or employ low and moderate-income people living within the Entitlement Community, then this is a misuse of funds.



4) Public Service Agencies in Lewiston perform tremendous work on a very limited budget. These are the groups that directly serve the population for whom CDBG money is designated. The former City Council’s decision to reduce funding for these groups should be reversed. Without these agencies, the symptoms of poverty will only worsen and create new barriers to realizing a better quality of life for all Lewiston residents.

5) The CDBG Review Committee must include downtown residents in the decision-making process. The recent amendment in the Citizen Participation Plan to include four Lewiston residents on the Review Committee is an important step to meeting this goal. However, an extra effort must be made to make sure people with low incomes in the Entitlement Community are the ones directing how CDBG money is allocated. There are many people whose input is critical but many are intimidated about participating on the Review Committee. Seeking their input may require working with the Visible Community, Empower Lewiston, or other downtown organizations and conducting door-to-door surveys or public meetings.

6) Finally, an accurate and detailed record of how CDBG money is spent should be kept at City Hall and made easily accessible to the public for review. The expenditures should be categorized first by WHO they mostly benefit, then the TYPE of project, and finally include a brief explanation of how the project benefits those in the Entitlement Community. Vague category titles such as “Downtown Improvement” and “Economic Development” should not be employed, because they don’t describe whether the activity benefits or harms downtown residents.

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE



***We must believe that it is the darkest before the dawn of a beautiful new world. We will see it when we believe it.” – Saul Alinsky***

The People’s Downtown Master Plan is not just a collection of pages and pictures and ideas from one point in time; it is a living document – one that, if implemented honestly, will change and grow as our neighborhoods change and grow.

The People’s Plan is always first and foremost a process of engaging downtown residents in working to change our community for the better. Many in our community assume that downtown residents are apathetic and indifferent to what happens to their community. The reality is that when asked and made to feel that their opinions are valued, downtown residents have a lot to say about what could bring about positive change for Lewiston. And many are ready to help make those changes happen when given the tools to do so. The People’s Plan doesn’t end here – we look forward to bringing this model to other neighborhoods in downtown Lewiston.

In future community visioning sessions we plan to seek more input from immigrant communities including the Somali, Somali-Bantu, Sudanese, Latino/a communities. We also plan to seek more input from youth and seniors. We hope that the People’s Plan will serve as yet another space to bring people from different backgrounds together to better understand each other’s dreams, motivations and struggles.

To ensure that the People’s Plan does not become yet another community plan that collects dust on a shelf, the Visible Community will initiate a series of check-in meetings with City officials and stakeholders to assess progress on the People’s Plan. We plan to hold the first of these check-ins in June of 2008 and a People’s Festival with residents in August of 2008. At the one year mark we plan to look to other neighborhoods to start visioning while remaining in contact with the Park, Knox, Bates, and Blake Street neighborhoods on our People’s Plan progress.



## CONCLUSION

*"We must be the change we wish to see in the world."*

- Ghandi

And so, the People's Downtown Master Plan now calls for improved public transportation, more affordable housing, a community center, and more job opportunities and training. Moreover, it makes the case, by its example, that it is essential that all downtown stakeholders have a voice in the process of decision-making. The justice and wisdom of this is that everyone who lives in downtown Lewiston is a taxpayer, that the best decisions are made when those impacted are involved, that residents will bring energy and commitment to achieving goals for their neighborhoods when their ideas have been actively sought and clearly respected, that residents will participate in government when that government demonstrates its understanding that those residents care deeply about what happens to their homes and their community.



It is shameful to contemplate solving inner city problems with a bulldozer, and there are no rationalizations for that approach that diminish that shame. We know there are economic challenges to be overcome. However, pushing people with low incomes out of our neighborhoods is immoral and does nothing to solve the root cause of our community's problems. A wise person once said, "If you have done it to the least of these, you have done it to me." We will be judged by what happens to the most vulnerable people in our community. Relying on charitable organizations has not solved our city's urban poverty issues. Government

can be a place where people come together and no one is left behind—no one – a place where the government is us.

The actions of a truly courageous city government that sees itself as fair and progressive, engaged and intentional, will demonstrate to downtown residents that we matter, that our homes are important, that our well-lighted sidewalks matter, that our neighborhoods have assets to preserve, enhance, and reclaim, that urban density can be a very good thing for community building, and can have its own wonderful quality of life.

The downtown neighborhoods have unique architecture in row houses, tenement buildings, and old mill buildings. Even if many have been neglected, they have good "bones"; because the people who intentionally built the dense downtown invested in visually appealing designs, with unique features like turrets—all to ensure that residents had beauty in their lives. We believe these can become new, reclaimed, and rehabilitated affordable, safe homes that benefit from buffers between residential and commercial areas. And with essential transportation, job opportunities, and lively, accessible space for community engagement, we believe it is possible for that pride of place, so much a part of Maine's brand, to grow and flourish





again in downtown Lewiston. Our future success rests on the need for public visioning processes for all projects that may impact the quality of life of downtown residents.

We are ready to work hard and long, doing our part to implement this People's Plan. We hope for an invitation from our city government, and we will be there as an active partner. We will do all we can to keep the downtown residents who participated in the plan's development engaged with decision-makers. And we will do all we can to draw more residents to be part of the tasks ahead



*The Future of Downtown Awaits Us!*  
Let's not discover our future by accident!

*"Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." – Margaret Mead*

**Contact us for more information!**

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